



# Watchung Hills Regional High School District

## Newsletter

July 2018

### From the desk of the Superintendent



As we celebrate another outstanding year of accomplishments by our Watchung Hills Regional High School students and staff members, our long awaited summer recess is once again upon us. I was honored to be able to articulate my appreciation and congratulations to the of the Class of 2018 during their commencement ceremony. I would now like to take a moment and welcome the incoming Class of 2022 to our world class learning community. These words may sound familiar to our upperclassmen as I find them important enough to revisit each summer with the incoming freshmen as they begin to navigate the next four years at Watchung Hills.

I have learned from my years as an educator that two key components result in success:

1. Kids being involved in their school.
2. Parents being involved in their kids' school.

Every member of the staff and Board of Education at Watchung Hills is committed to ensuring **every** student is provided with the opportunity to reach his or her potential. I encourage all of our incoming 9th grade students and parents to peruse the pages that follow filled with the accomplishments of your 10th, 11th, and 12th grade classmates and begin a conversation around the opportunities that interest you at Watchung Hills next year. My number one piece of advice for all members of the Class of 2021 is: **Get involved!** Join a club, sport, musical ensemble, academic team, etc. - there is something for everyone at Watchung Hills. I would also like to offer a few additional recommendations to the Class of 2021 to assist you on the path to success at Watchung Hills:

- School is important; but so is your social and emotional development. Keep balance in your life.
- Eat breakfast and lunch. Keep your body well fueled throughout the day.
- Get enough sleep. The average teenager needs between 7-9 hours of sleep at night.
- Do not worry about fitting in. Worry about being true to yourself and your value system.
- Never give up. The only failure is when we stop trying.

To the Watchung Hills Regional High School Class of 2022 - stay the course as the best is yet to come!

Warm Regards,

Superintendent

## Graduation 2018



Under somewhat overcast skies that kept temperatures comfortable, 563 members of the Class of 2018 graduated from Watchung Hills Regional High School at the school's 61st Commencement, Friday, June 22, in Howard A. Tozier Stadium.

With the stadium's stands filled with parents, siblings and family members, and the fences surrounding the field lined with more, plus a courtesy tent at the back of the field for elderly grandparents and relations, and those who could not easily get around, the graduates and their guests heard remarks from six speakers, including: Fellow classmates Sahil Patel, representing the student government's All School Council; Freddie Hayeck, who is both the Senior Class President and an elected member of the WHRHS Board of Education; and Linda Ye, who delivered the Class Valedictory. Classmate Kevin Tan had previously delivered the Class of 2018 Salutatory at the Senior Awards Ceremony, Thursday, June 14, at the school's Performing Arts Center. The entire Senior Class attended that assembly, too.

Also addressing the students, with girls dressed in white academic gowns, and boys in gold academic gowns -- and many wearing mortar boards that had been decorated to announced the college they plan to attend -- was: Principal George Alexis, Superintendent Elizabeth Jewett, and WHRHS Board of Education President Peter Fallon.

For more than an hour before the commencement began and while parents and guests were arriving and filling up the stands, the WHRHS Symphonic Band, under the direction of WHRHS Instrumental Music Teacher Paul McCullen, set up on the field slightly to the rear and to the right of the stage. They performed numerous songs from the repertoire the students had learned throughout the year. They drew from a broad range of musical genre, everything from "Safety Dance," by "Men with Hats," to P.I. Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture."

Throughout this pre-ceremony concert, senior members of the Symphony Band, clad in their caps and gowns, joined with their younger fellow musicians, to perform together for the seniors' last time. The seniors then left to join their fellow graduates in the procession line, and the remaining three years of musicians intoned the traditional "Pomp and Circumstance." That is the 1901 composition by Sir Edward Elgar that bears a title taken from Act III, Scene 3, of Shakespeare's masterpiece, "Othello." The Commencement had begun.

As tradition has it, the procession was led by two flag bearers who are Rising Seniors. This year, they were: Juniors and twin sisters Anna and Becca Baitel.

The Senior Choir, like the band, performed in their caps and gowns. Under the direction of WHRHS Choral Music Teacher Angela DiIorio Bird, they sang,

"The Star Spangled Banner," by Francis Scott Key, composed in 1814 after having witnessed first-hand the Battle of Baltimore in the War of 1812.

Later, there was a musical Interlude between the remarks of the Class President's address and the Valedictory. Graduating senior Peri Martins sang a stirring rendition of the anthemic song, "The Climb," by Miley Silas. She was accompanied by fellow graduating senior Will Johnson on piano. Both are members of the Senior Choir. The lyrics of the song's refrain are: "There's always gonna be another mountain/ I'm always gonna wanna make it move/ Always gonna be an uphill battle/ Sometimes I'm gonna have to lose/ Ain't about how fast I get there/ Ain't about what's waiting on the other side/ It's the climb."



Linda Ye  
Valedictorian



## Graduation 2018 (Cont'd)





## 2018 Teacher of the Year—Jill Gleeson

Health Education Teacher Jill Gleeson has been selected as the 2017-2018 Teacher of the Year.

Gleeson began teaching health and physical education at WHRHS in September 2004. From 2004 to 2009, she coached varsity softball and junior varsity girls' basketball.

When introducing her to a gathering on WHRHS Faculty when the Teacher of the Year selection was announced, Principal Alexis said, "Jill has been instrumental in deepening our commitment to wellness. Her passion for cultivating healthy lifestyles is benefiting our students and our entire school community. In addition to her great work in the classroom each day and her significant contributions to an excellent health curriculum, she has helped coordinate and lead several evening programs for students, parents, and community members, all in an effort to promote wellness and advance the district's strategic plan."

Gleeson is also recognized for revising WHRHS curriculum and restructuring, in particular, the ninth-grade health program.

Gleeson is faculty advisor to the Teen

Action Group, a student extracurricular activity, which is a subcommittee of the Student Wellness Group. Thanks to the leadership of an energetic group of mostly Juniors and Sophomores, she said, the Teen Action Group has participated in several initiatives to



facilitate more positive mental health environment for students. Among other activities, they arranged to have student musicians and singers provide music in the main entrance atrium greeting students as they arrive by bus to help them start their school day in a brighter mood.

During her time at WHRHS, she has had time to nurture her philosophy as a teacher. She said she has a passion for educating teens on the most pertinent

health issues in today's society. Among her areas of particular interest are substance use and co-occurring disorders involving mental health.

Gleeson is in her 14th year of teaching Health Education. Being on faculty at Watchung Hills was her first teaching position after college.

She is a graduate of Bound Brook High School, where she excelled on the school's Softball Team and Girls Basketball Team.

Gleeson received her bachelor's degree in Kinesiology from West Chester University, West Chester, Pa. She completed her student teaching at local schools near West Chester.

She earned her master's degree in Public Health from Walden University, Minneapolis, Mn. Gleeson completed her internship in Public Health at Somerset Medical Center, Somerset, now called RWJ University Hospital Somerset.

She and her husband, Sgt. Danny Gleeson of the Warren Township Police, have two sons, Danny, 6, and Cameron, 4.

## Girls State



On May 24th Mayor Carolann Garafola of Warren came to speak to our students who were accepted to Girls State this year. She talked about women getting involved in government, including her own experiences. Pictured (left to right): Jacquelyn Steen, Eshika Kaul, Carolann Garafola, Mariam Ivaniashvili, Francesca Minervini. Missing from the picture is Jordan Ginsberg.



## World Languages Honor Societies Inductions

Some 242 students studying one or more of five World Languages at Watchung Hills Regional High School were inducted into those languages' academic honor societies at a ceremony on Tuesday, April 11, in the school's Performing Arts Center.

According to World Languages Supervisor Brad Commerford, the numbers of students honored this year for superior academic excellence of the five languages are: 117 in Spanish, 41 in Italian; 38 in French; and 38 in Chinese; and eight in German.

Five students qualified for two language honor societies, Commerford said. They are: Michelle Du in French and Spanish; Julia Fullowan in Chinese and Spanish; Amber Sautner in Chinese and French; Marlene Tartaro in Chinese and Spanish; and Vincent Pasquale Tartaro in Italian and Spanish. Some 89 students qualified for their Language Honor Societies for the second year, he said.

Students took the "Oaths of the Language Honor Societies," by assenting in the appropriate vocabulary of that language, after the oath was projected on the jumbo-sized screen on stage, and read aloud in that language by one of the students from each of the languages. The readers in each language were: Jennifer Walpow in Chinese; Sam Sinnott in French; Fiona Mulvey in German; Vincent Pasquale Tartaro in Italian and Michelle Du in Spanish.

In addition, 50 WHRHS students

achieved the NJ State Seal of Biliteracy, meaning students demonstrated that they were able to speak, read, listen and write in two or more languages at a high level of proficiency. They demonstrated a mastery in English by their passing score in the

it officially became legislation in California, and multiple states have implemented a statewide Seal of Biliteracy. In 2016, New Jersey became the 15<sup>th</sup> state to do so, and this year there are 23 states participating.

WHRHS is one of 88 schools in New Jersey to participate.

Among the 50 students who qualified this year, one student is Nina Goliyard, whose second language was Russian. Russian is not currently offered at

WHRHS. Likewise, Commerford said next year, two WHRHS students will likely qualify in their second language, Portuguese, even though Portuguese is not offered at WHRHS.

Commerford explained, "If a student can demonstrate a mastery in speaking, reading, listening and writing in a second language on the ACTFL tests, by passing the PARCC Test in English Language Proficiency, and achieving the required score in the ACTFL test in the second language, any student can qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy, even if their school does not offer the language as a subject."

He added, the Seal of Biliteracy will then be included in official school transcripts.



PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) Test in English Language Skills, and their passing scores in a test from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

"The Seal of Biliteracy was an initiative started by Californians Together in 2008 to acknowledge and reward hardworking bilingual and multilingual students," according to information in the program at the World language Honor Society Induction Ceremony on April 11. "In 2011,

## Spring Musical “Guys and Dolls”

Staging the annual spring musical at WHRHS, which this year was the iconic Broadway and Hollywood musical, “Guys and Dolls,” was a living-learning experience for hundreds of students, teachers, parents, community volunteers and supporters.

And, as if simply staging a high quality high school musical isn't enough of a challenge every year, this year had the added challenge of performance dates during March 2018, when there were multiple snow events during a roller coaster three weeks leading up to the scheduled musical performances.

Lost school days due to inclement weather and icy and snowy driving conditions cut into the crucial last-minute days of mastering the acting, singing and dancing rehearsal and set production required for a massive 24-scene Broadway classic.

Plus, one of those snow events was during the very week of the scheduled and always-important dress rehearsal and the three days of evening performances and a Saturday matinee. Fortunately, only one performance – the Thursday evening performance – had to be cancelled. Instead, that time was used for the dress rehearsal. The wait was well worth it, it turns out, as the school's Script and Cue student drama program thrilled audiences with memorable and stellar performances on Friday night, Saturday afternoon and Saturday night.

Mastering this living-learning experience was the collaboration, like the creation of a finely-tuned

interdisciplinary independent study thesis project, of not just the actors, singers and dancers on stage, but also the musicians on the Orchestra Pit. Plus, behind the scenes, there was another whole set of “crew” specialists, including set designers and

students to learn about the business of staging a musical, including budgeting, supplying and organizing refreshments, even coordinating an army of ushers to handle the orderly seating of hundreds of audience members.



The Cast included: Jacob Lesser at Sky Masterson and Christine Tanko as Sarah Brown; Scott Romankow as Nathan Detroit and Kyra Anthony as Adelaide; also, as the Guys, Jack Melillo as Nice-Nicely, Sam Sinnott as Benny Southwest, Ben Allgor as Rusty Charlie, Matt Oboh as Harry the Horse, Matt MacKrell as Angie the Ox, Andrew Moberly as Joey Biltmore, Will Johnson as Big Jule, Lucas Mammone as Lt. Brannigan, and Justin Horowitz as Master of Ceremonies. Carly MacManus portrayed the character General Cartwright.

The Mission soldiers included: Will Broder

as Arvide Abernathy, Angie Carrano as Agatha, Summer Stuart as Calvina, Ariya Blow as Martha; and, as Mission soldiers, Brigita Przybylski, Maddie Johnson, Maddie Leong, Sophia Su, Angela Munoz, Natasha Bird and Kaelin Churchill.

The Crap Shooters/Dancers included: Matt Oboh, Ben Allgor, Kevin Lynch, Matt Mazzarisi, Spencer Acciarito, Chris Gagliano, Heather Sherry, Emma Giordano, and Jenny Miller.

The Hot Box Girls/Ensemble Dancers include: Emma Marszalek, Avery Noerr, Nicole Vila, Claire Vickery, Sophia Blanchard, Nicole Bell, Dana

artists for costume and make-up. Additional stage crew members hone the crafts of stage managing, prop coordination, lighting and sound technology, directing, and applied graphic arts support for media items such as programs, posters, and ancillary media press materials.

There are also related applied lessons for



## Spring Musical “Guys and Dolls” (Cont’d)

Wasserman, Francesca Infante-Meehan, Kayla Martins Anchal Dhir, Emma Leary and Giovanna DiSanto.

The Dance Captains were Sam Sinnott and Francesca Infante-Meehan.

The Havana Waiters were: Jenny Miller and Matt Mazzarisi. Playing parts in the opening “Runyonland Prologue” were: Actress, Giovanna DeSanto; Rich Woman, Emma Marszalek; Tour Guide, Matt McKrell; Sight Seer, Avery Noerr; Photographer, Kevin Lynch; Old Woman, Dana Wasserman; Street Walkers, Francesca Infante-Meehan, Kayla Martins, and Anchal Dhir; Texan, Chris Gagliano; Texan’s Wife, Heather Sherry; Bobby Soxers, Emma Giordano and Emma Leary; Surly Person, Matt Mazzarisi; Policeman, Spencer Acciarito; Blind Man, Justin Horowitz, and Baby Carriage Hawker, Jenny Miller.

The Orchestra included: Violins, Emma Golkin, Victor Hu, Harrison Lavelle, Jenny Li, Shruthi Ramasamy, Carter Rosen, Alvanna Tam, Neha Venkatesh, Jocelyn Wang, Tyler Wu, Jack White and Nandini Yellamelli; Viola, Valerie Wang; Cellos, Madeline Dietrich, Daria Monti, Spencer Shao, and William Wu; and Bass, Anjali Blow and Roosevelt Porter;

Percussion, Ronald Dolce and Natalia Sosniak; Keyboard, Zoe Golkin;

Reeds: Elizabeth Baker, Jeremy Cui, Glen Diamond, Timothe Iroudassamy, Sanjay Subramanian, and Cherlin Zhu; Horn, Ben Walkins; Trumpets, Ryan Branco, Matthew Shaefer, and Carl Peterson; and Trombone, Jack Horan.

This production of Guys and Dolls was directed by WHRHS Drama Teacher Douglas Eaton. He was also the set designer. Music Direction was provided by WHRHS Choral Music Teacher Angela DiIorio Bird. The Orchestral Director was WHRHS Instrumental Music Teacher Paul McCullen.

The Chief Assistant Director was Emily Snead, Assistant Director, Kathleen O’Mullan; Production Stage Manager, Mark Caamano. Scenic Artist was Kate Griffin; Costume Design, Gail DeCicco; Lighting Design, Chris Valenti; Sound Design, Rick Clark; Lead Assistant Sound Mixer, Alexander Martin; Assistant Sound Mixer, Brianna Caetano.

Chief Carpenter was Nick DiNizio; Costumes, Alison Wolf; Costumes Crew, Arden Dettling, Erica Munoz, Sara Barrientos, Genevieve Rust, Maddy Goffredo; Prop Master, Jessica Pearlstein; and Prop Crew, Becca Dickerson, Rachel Krouk, Hannah Marszalek, and Michelle Chavanne.

Sound Mics, Michael Maloney and Krystyna Leski; Lighting Board Operator, Portia Rowley; Spot Lighting, Adam Noble and Michael Wong; Scenic Painters, Fiona Mulvey, Amelia Randolph, Marianna Renda, Ariana Gilligan, Kaitlin Chin and Stephanie Ormaeche; Hair and Makeup, Hollace Chase, Brianna Casas, Juliet Leary, Shelby Waddy, Hannah Stevens, Erin Pinto, Ivey Ledward, Arianne Rahimi, Julia Celeste, Madelena Goffredo, Ariana Gilligan, Josephine Pascale, Malvika George, Sophie Frank, and Kat Peterson.

Rigging, Pat Dempsey, Colin Beisler and Gabriel Snead; Running Crew, Max Dubliner, Gabby Ramirez, Nina DiNorscio, Emily Dec, Gillian Loesberg, Michael Sullivan, Skylar Paltjon, Massai Shuler, Sophia Patti, Amelia Randolph, Katie Strong, Melissa Miketen, Kip Degeorges and Roshni Dave.

Tech on Deck, Tyler Horvath; Ushers, Navya Menon, Chelsea Kramer and Jennifer Buser; Head of House, Elizabeth Chapleski; Script & Cue Business manager, Dianne Krutz.

Program headshots and group shots, William Johnson; Play Program, Laura Zijdel.

Music and Lyrics for Guys and Dolls by Frank Loesser; Book by Abe Burrows and

Jo Swerling. Based on the short story, The Idyll of Sarah Brown, and other characters developed by journalist and author Damon Runyon. The production is made through special arrangement through Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI.



## TEDx Youth@WHRHS

Eleven speakers presented personal testimonials about moments in their lives that inspired and empowered them to pursue dreams of “making a difference in the world,” at “TEDxYouth@WHRHS,” Monday, May 21, at Watchung Hills Regional High School.

The speakers, in order of appearance, were: Junior Jordyn Arnel, Sophomore Abby Kotar, Senior Nicole Bell, Senior Lindsey Shi, Senior Kevin Wittmaack, WHRHS English Teacher Michael Porter, Junior Jordan Ginsburg, Senior Matthew Canary, Sophomore Niharika “Nina” Iyer, Junior Spencer Acciarito and Senior Ashil Jhaveri.

The event, which reflected the school-wide strategy to encourage, recognize and grow from interdisciplinary approaches to problem-solving and learning, was organized by a collaboration of the

student Computer Science Cub, the Accounting Club and the Culinary Club. The organizing Committee included students Kevin Huang, Marilyn Du, Matt McCracken, Annabelle Ku, Davin Lui, Nicole Salk, Neelay Trivedi, Ella Walsh, and Megan Krutz.

Faculty Advisors for the event included Math and Business Supervisor Dan Twisler, Business Teacher Dianne Krutz, and Culinary Club Advisors Susan Jaslove and Stephanie Ormaeche, as well as volunteer and Watchung Public Schools retired teacher Elaine Chesebro. She had taught at Grades K-8 Watchung Public Schools for 18 years. She had the

inspiration of seeing eight of her former students attend TEDxYouth @WHRHS:



WHRHS Freshman Hans Parikh, Valley View School 8<sup>th</sup> Grader Shiv Goel, WHRHS Freshman Rahil Navani, Senior Kevin Huang, and WHRHS Freshmen Jacob Weber, Marshall White and Charlie Margulies.

TEDxYouth conferences are geared for high school and middle school students who aspire to be dreamers, thinkers, makers and doers looking to make a difference in the world.”

The TEDxYouth@WHRHS” is an independently organized event designed to bring a TedxYouth-like experience to Watchung Hills, according to the event’s

program. TEDxYouth events are designed to be student organized events, where the living learning experience includes: Not just the subject matters of the conferences, but also the problem solving involved in all the aspects of organizing, promoting and assembling promotional materials. The students also actually run the conferences, according to the students who organized the event, as well as solicit, tabulate and report feedback from the event’s audience.

According to Faculty Advisor Twisler, TEDxYouth events have taken on a positive reputation among today’s students and academics as “forward-thinking, cutting edge” living learning experiences. Student organizers, speakers and participants have taken to listing participation in such events on their resumes as signs that they are availing themselves of this kind of insider’s latest advancement in education.

The events also thrive on the active participation of participants. “As part of our license to be an official TEDx event,” the program and organizers explain to the audience, “we are required to collect feedback from the audience. We would appreciate you taking the time at the end of the event to either scan this QR code or follow the [goo.gl](https://goo.gl/kT3fs9) link to share your reflection. Thank you in advance for your help. The code is <https://goo.gl/kT3fs9>. We also invite you to share any of the photos you have taken this evening of yourself or the speakers to our Flickr group at [goo.gl/PjGM7Z](https://goo.gl/PjGM7Z).”



## TEDx Youth@WHRHS (Cont'd)

This is the second TEDxYouth event held at WHRHS. Last year, student empowerment, innovation and inspiration was again “not just on the agenda, it was the agenda” at the 2017 “TEDx Youth@WHRHS.

Offering TEDxYouth events at WHRHS grew out of the community outreach and organizing committee discussions that included student participation as far back as 2015. Those discussions led to the adoption of the empowerment-inspired goals and objectives in the WHRHS “2015-2020 Strategic Plan, A Warrior Vision.”



## 2018 Harlem Wizards Game



During a night of wins, the crowd's consensus seemed unanimous: It was the kids who stole the show. Instead of judging by the running score, the players and the fans agreed that the 2018 Harlem Wizards Game on May 3rd in the WHRHS Gym 5/6, should be decided by a “dance-of” between the players and the kids.

The consensus was: The kids won the dance-off, hands down.



One of the other winners at the contest was the four grades K-5 Schools in Warren Township, according to WHRHS All-School Council (ASC) faculty Advisor Maureen Kelly. As much as \$1,350 was raised for the four schools.

The Wizards Game, between the legendary Harlem Wizards “Tricks, Hoops and Alley Oops” Team and an All-Star Team of faculty and administrators from the four Warren schools, ALT (Angela L. Tomaso), Mount Horeb, Woodland and Central schools, was a fundraiser to benefit grades K-8 Warren Township Schools.

The game was hosted by the WHRHS ASC, which every year sponsors fundraising, fun-raising and awareness-raising efforts to benefit worthy causes in the community, Kelly said. Student members of the ASC volunteered at the event, including: At the front door; at two Harlem Wizards paraphernalia stands; and at a refreshment area set up in an adjacent gym.



## 2018 Arts Festival

Hundreds of pieces of art created by student artists were exhibited throughout the main entrance atrium, and up and down the corridors surrounding the Performing Arts Center, and a collection of 13 scenes from iconic plays organized around the theme, “Evolution of Theatre” were performed by student actors in the Drama Studio to open the three-day 2018 Spring Arts Festival, May 30-June 1, at WHRHS.

The Spring Arts Festival featured the best in the Creative and Performing Arts in the WHRHS Arts Department, culminated four months of creative output from hundreds of WHRHS students. Day One of the festival, Wednesday, May 30, featured the Visual Arts Exhibition and a performance by the Drama Department; Day Two of the festival, Thursday, May 31, featured the Student Film Festival and the Spring Instrumental Music Performance; and Day Three of the festival, Friday, June 1, featured the Spring Dance Concert and the Spring Vocal Music Concert.

The exhibition of 2 and 3-dimensional visual art included works in all mediums including drawings, paintings, photographs, ceramic works, sculptures, jewelry, fashion, crafts, graphic design pieces and creations made from wood. They were displayed on the walls, glass enclosed cases, freestanding exhibition boards and table tops throughout the Entrance Atrium and along the walls surrounding the Performing Arts Center.

Of special note were the clusters of works created by as many as 30 senior art students, members of the AP Art 3 classes, whose course requirements included significant portfolios of finished art, half of which was submitted for review by AP, the other half submitted for classroom purposes and exhibition.





## Spring Band Concert



Watchung Hills Regional High School student musicians in the school's Concert Band, the Orchestra and Wind Ensemble unearthed the potential for humor in instrumental music early on in the 2018 Spring Instrumental Music Concert, with a selection from P.D.Q. Bach, at the 2018 Spring Instrumental Music Concert, Thursday, May 31, in the school's Performing Arts Center (PAC).

The WHRHS student musicians then went on to perform a wide array of fetching compositions, from the worlds of pop to classical music, by the Concert Band, String Orchestra, and Wind Ensemble, ending with one of the most

universally known musical hooks from no less than P.I. Tchaikovsky, himself, the "1812 Overture."

The Spring Instrumental Music Concert was part of the Spring Arts Festival, which featured the best in the Creative and Performing Arts in the WHRHS Arts Department, culminated four months of creative output from hundreds of WHRHS students.

## Spring Vocal Concert

The theme for the 2018 Spring Vocal Concert, Friday, June 1, at Watchung Hills Regional High School was "Messages of Empowerment," and through the singing of 20 songs, some 200 well-rehearsed WHRHS student voices seemed to find 20 ways to draw out deep emotional responses in both the singers and the audience.

Like the highlight of the nationally televised Tony Awards on June 10, from Radio City Music Hall, New York, one of the most emotional highlights of the WHRHS Spring Vocal Concert was the "Senior Group" ensemble singing the iconic anthem from the Broadway Musical, "Rent," "Seasons of Love." As at The Tony Awards, where the stirring composition was sung by drama students from Stoneman Douglas High School, Parkland, Fla., the WHRHS student performance of the anthem drew upon a deep well of emotional response. The song, appropriate for seniors as they complete their four years of high school, was both nourishing and nurturing for everyone in the WHRHS PAC.



The audience could witness the fact that being a part of that performance for students was as empowering to the WHRHS student singers, as it was to the audience members, who were likewise empowered, encouraged, and lifted up by the students.

That dynamic -- the student empowered to teach the audience while the students were also empowered to teach each other and themselves -- was repeated throughout the concert.

## Spring Jazz Concert

Parents, staff and fellow students filled the Performing Arts Center stage at WHRHS to get “this close” to witnessing nearly 70 student musicians explore some 17 classic jazz compositions during the Annual Spring Jazz Concert on Thursday, April 26.



and Green Brook, for sending WHRHS such well-trained student musicians.

The student musicians seemed to have not just learned and mastered the songs academically, but also warmed up artistically to the songs selections. They came from legendary jazz greats, with numbers composed by the likes of Cole Porter, Hoagy Carmichael, Henry Mancini, Charlie Parker, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Stevie Wonder, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, and Charles Mingus, among others.

In addition, there were a variety of band configurations for the performances. There were three experience levels of straight jazz bands. The most experienced of these bands performed the last four numbers of the evening, and seemed to perform each one flawlessly.

Also performing was the WHRHS Orchestra, which showed just how “jazz cool” stringed instruments could be. There was also a classic All-Star Dixie Band, with only six student performers, that demonstrated just how much it really knew how to capture the “New Orleans” sound, with a rousing rendition of “When the Saints Go Marching In.” The evening even boasted three sung jazz performances, featuring soloist singers from the WHRHS Choral Music program. One sang with a full jazz band, a popular set up during the golden age of jazz. Two were accompanied by recorded jazz music, including one singing the Frank Sinatra classic, “Fly Me To The Moon.”



## ALS Alliance Club - 2018 Project ALS



The ALS Alliance Club at WHRHS has raised some \$2,130 this year for Project ALS. In addition, the Senior Class donated \$2,000.

The activity takes its name and inspiration from the major fundraising non-profit, Project ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis). Founded in 1998 by the Jenifer, Valerie and Meredith Estess, Project ALS is a non-profit organization whose mission is to identify and support leading scientific research toward effective treatments and a cure for ALS.

Every year, the school’s student All School Council (ASC) adopts a cause or non-profit as its focus for year-long fundraising projects, and in the 2015-16 school year, the cause and non-profit was Project ALS. The current ALS Alliance Club carries on that effort.

The ALS Alliance Club held several fundraisers during the school year, including the ALS Talent Show on Feb. 8, a “Bake and Taste” on May 18, and a “Torment Your Teachers” fundraiser on June 12. In addition, they held periodic bake sales throughout the year.



## Spring Dance Concert

The Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS) Dance Ensemble explored a broad spectrum of dance expression through a program that included 21 numbers at the 2018 Spring Dance Concert, Friday and Saturday, May 11 and 12, in the school's Performing Arts Center.



The vast majority of the numbers were also choreographed by WHRHS students. Dance Department Educator Annanda Pagenkopf is the Dance Ensemble Advisor. She choreographed the number, "Senior Dance," and was the Spring Dance Concert's Lighting Designer.



Anna Paterson was the guest artist for the Spring Dance Concert. She is a 2016 WHRHS graduate and Dance Ensemble Alumnae, who is now pursuing her degree in Dance Education with a minor in Writing Studies at Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y.

## 2018 All-State Choral and Instrumental Music

Fourteen Watchung Hills Regional High School students have been selected to participate in All-State music groups: Three in Choral Music and 11 in Instrumental Music.

Student singers selected for All-State Choir are: For Treble Choir, Junior Summer Stuart; and for Mixed Choir, Sophomore Christine Tanko and Junior Will Broder.

Student musicians selected for All-State Ensembles are:

For Symphonic Band: Flute, Cathleen Luo and Lindsey Shi; Oboe, Jeremy Cui; Clarinet, Katie Tan; Trumpet, Ryan Branco and Carl Peterson; Trumpet, Matthew Schaefer; Trombone, Jack Horan. For Orchestra: Violin, David Ki and Tyler Wu; and For Wind Ensemble: Tuba, Ethan Marmolejos.

In addition, senior Ethan Marmolejos has been selected to be among the New Jersey students recognized at the annual Governor's Awards in Arts Education ceremony.



## Retiring Teachers

Four WHRHS teachers to retire this summer; one retired in December .

School Nurse Francine Dello Russo of the Health Office; Chemistry Teacher Victoria Hubinger of the Science Department; Student Assistance Counselor Julie Kumpf of the Guidance Department; and Physical Education Teacher Tom Loeffler of the Physical Education/Health Department; Geometry Teacher Susan Sheldon of the Mathematics Department.



Victoria Hubinger has been a teacher at WHRHS for 15 years. She started teaching in 1982 for the Union County Regional High School District which dissolved in 1997 then she went to work for Jonathan Dayton High School in Springfield. In 1999, she resigned to stay home to raise her children. In 2003, she returned to teaching at WHRHS. Ms. Hubinger is a graduate of Mount Saint Mary Academy. She received her bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Cook College, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, where she also earned a Comprehensive Science Teaching Certificate Grades K-12. She received her master's degree in Instruction and Curriculum from Kean College, now Kean University, Union, and has continued to earn some 30 additional credits in Geology, Meteorology, Oceanography and Astronomy. She studied the Geology of the islands of Hawaii on site in Hawaii. While at WHRHS, her professional activities and special assignments have been: Science League Coach Chem I team, member of STEM Team to coordinate Math and Science curriculum, ChemCom team leader, and new science teacher mentor. She assisted WHRHS Chem Olympics team in competition at Ryder University, was a member of Chemistry curriculum writing team, ACS Chem-TAG member, and worked with interdisciplinary groups towards Watchung Hills' 5-year Strategic Plan. She helped design problem-based assessments for Chemistry through a grant awarded by the Connect-ED program at Rider University, Lawrence Township.



Julie Kumpf has been a Student Assistance Counselor (SAC) at WHRHS since 2002. She is a licensed social worker, receiving both her bachelor's degree and master's degree of Social Work at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. She moved from Delaware to New Jersey during high school, and graduated from Columbia High School in Maplewood. Ms. Kumpf worked as a social worker in the Special Education Department in Summit School District for two years, before coming to WHRHS as a SAC in 2002. She pursued the SAC position because it gave her the opportunity to counsel students about a variety of issues, particularly mental health issues and substance abuse prevention, and the flexibility to design prevention and intervention programs and activities, such as Challenge Day," she said. As co-chairperson of the Wellness initiative, she helped implement programs and activities that address the mental health of our school community. Ms. Kumpf was the recipient of the Teacher of the Year at WHRHS in 2017. In 2011, she received the Somerset County Youth Services Award for Professional Service to Youth." Ms.. Kumpf has been a member of the Watching Hills Municipal Alliance for the past 16 years.



Tom Loeffler started working at WHRHS as a Physical Education/Health Teacher in 1987. Two years later, he started the Project Adventure Program here. WHRHS was the first school in Somerset County, and only the third school in New Jersey, to offer Adventure Education. It has been offered ever since. Mr. Loeffler is a graduate of Union High School. He earned his bachelor's degree in Health and Physical Education from East Stroudsburg State College, East Stroudsburg, Pa. He earned his master's degree and another 60 credits at Kean College, Union. For 23 years, he was a coach at WHRHS, coaching Football, Basketball and Track. Among the highlights of his coaching career, Mr. Loeffler's Track teams won a number of Somerset County, Skyland's Conference and Sectional titles.



Susan Sheldon who taught at WHRHS from September 2001 to Dec. 1, 2017, has returned to live in Newark, Del. Ms. Sheldon is a 1972 graduate of Christiana High School in Newark. In 1976, she graduated with a bachelor's degree in Mathematics from the University of Delaware, Newark, and in 2007, she completed a master's degree in Instruction from The College of New Jersey, Ewing Township. Mr. Sal Fazzino in his retirement speech at the Midyear Party said of Ms. Sheldon: "All those years of teaching Geometry together, I saw firsthand your passion and your dedication to making the course a great one...great because you strove to not just maintain its rigor but to make sure it remained student centered."



## Retiring Teachers (Cont'd)



Francine Dello Russo, School Nurse, first started working at WHRHS in 2008, after having worked for 36 years as a registered nurse in various nursing positions in hospitals. At WHRHS, she has participated in a variety of programs, including Challenge Day, Intervention and Referral Team, Core Team, and the Emergency Response Team. Dello Russo began her nursing career at East Orange General Hospital School of Nursing, affiliated with Upsala College in East Orange. Her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing was earned at College of St. Elizabeth, Convent Station. She earned her Certification in School Nursing (CSN), from Caldwell University, Caldwell. Dello Russo successfully managed all facets of the health office responsibilities, participated in the development of the health office Web page, and implemented standards and protocols for the treatment of students with severe allergies.

## Athletic Signings



Eighteen Watchung Hills Regional High School student athletes who competed in sports have signed to play sports in college: Four at Division I schools, one at a Division II school, and 13 at Division III Schools. Another nine WHRHS student athletes signed to play sports in college in November, and one signed in February. Among those who signed on April 30 are, seated, from left: Robin McCabe, Erin Bean, Genna Cicchetti, Emma Gaffney, Marlene Tartaro, Jessie Hoffman, Alyssa Galdi; and standing, from left, Brian Puccio, Dan Hold, Ryan Santos, Connor James, Rob Saum, Justin Hayward, Sheldon Kohl and Henry Engel. Those not present for the photo: Marlise Moesch, Dan Pilsbury and Brenda Peng.



Some 30 student athletes from the Watchung Hills Regional High School Class of 2018 gathered on Monday, June 4, in the Media Center for one last Warrior team photo before reporting to their intended respective colleges or universities in the fall. They are: Bottom row, left to right: Erin Bean, Genna Cicchetti, Jillian Chan, Julia Cunningham, Emma Gaffney, Marlise Moesch, and Julia Burton; Middle row, left to right: Principal George Alexis, Dan Pilsbury, Sheldon Kohl, Brenda Peng, Dan Hold, Kyle Rokosny, Brian Puccio, Rob Saum, Jonathan Taub, and Athletic Director Chris Van Vliet; and Top row, left to right: Drew Furlong, Ryan Santos, Alyssa Galdi, Henry Engel, Jessie Hoffman, Marlene Tartaro, Katie Carroll, and Robin McCabe. Not in the photo: Christopher Clintock, Justin

Hayward, Connor James, Tyler James, Michael Murray, Tyler Riley, and Zahveae Thorne.



WHRHS Girls Track Team  
Group 4 State Champions



WHRHS Boys Golf Team  
State Sectional Champions  
Group IV State Champions



WHRHS Girls Basketball Team  
Skyland Conference Champions



WHRHS Wrestling Team  
Skyland Conference Champions  
State Sectional Champions  
District 16 Champions



Jamie Lovejoy  
NJ.Com & NJ North Chapter  
Lacrosse Coach of the Year



Dan Smith  
NJ State Wrestling Coaches Assn & Region IV  
Wrestling Coach of the Year



WHRHS Boys Lacrosse  
State Sectional Champions  
& State Group IV Champions

## The Hills Final Roundup

- ◆ Olivia Xu, Linda Ye and Cherlin Zhu have been selected for a National Merit \$2,500 Scholarship, which is underwritten by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.
- ◆ Senior Helen Yang has been selected for the National Merit Novo Nordisk, Inc. Scholarship, which is sponsored by Novo Nordisk, Inc.
- ◆ Helen Yang was also awarded the James J. Kerrigan Memorial Scholarship by Merck & Co., Inc. Children of Merck employees are eligible based on their scholastic achievement, leadership potential, and community involvement.
- ◆ Senior Wyatt Mejia has received the Chick Evans Scholarship for Caddies, which is a four-year college scholarship for golf caddies. Recipients of this prestigious scholarship are nominated by the sponsoring country club where they have caddied. This is a privately funded scholarship named in honor of legendary amateur golfer Chick Evans whose legacy was to send deserving caddies to college.
- ◆ Juniors Annabel Liao and Gabriela Santos and Senior Danae Churchill have earned the highest award in Girl Scouting, the prestigious Gold Award.
- ◆ Seniors Joseph Wagner and Matthew King have earned the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest award in scouting.
- ◆ Aaron Hao and Neelay Trivedi of the Chemistry Olympiad Club made it to the National Level of the Chemistry Olympiad. This makes them two of the top 1,000 chemistry students in the nation
- ◆ Two members of the National Speech and Debate Club, siblings Deepa Irakam and Roopa Irakam, were recognized by the association's Honor Society. Deepa was awarded a Degree of Distinction and Roopa was awarded a Degree of Special Distinction. Both girls were been invited to compete in the Tournament of Champions at the University of Kentucky.
- ◆ WHRHS students Edward Cai and Linda Ye received the 2018 Scholastic Art and Writing Award National Medal. Junior Edward Cai received the Gold Medal in the category of photography for his work "Subway Dreamer." Linda Ye received a Gold Medal in Poetry for "Because Rock Candy is Richer Than Gold" and a Silver Medal in Poetry for "Rice in Solitude." Linda Ye is also an editor of Arrowhead, our school newspaper.



## The Hills Final Roundup (Cont'd)

- ◆ The Future Business Leaders of America participated in this year's State Leadership Conference. The following club members earned awards:

Jagdeep Bhatia - 1st place in Coding and Programming  
Gillian O'Meara - 4th place in Accounting  
Deepta Raghavan - 4th place in Journalism  
Demetra Chang - 4th place in Networking Concepts  
Vamsi Desu, Kevin Tan and Peter Wu - 5th place in Marketing  
Sahil Patel and Andrew Pluta - 5th place in Sports and Entertainment Management

- ◆ Our Robotics Team finished their season with a strong performance at the regional competition held at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA. The team earned the Judge's Award, which is given when the "judge's panel" encounters a team whose unique efforts, performance, or dynamics merit recognition. Earlier in the season, the team was awarded twice with the Innovation on Control Award sponsored by Rockwell Automation, while making it to the quarterfinals in both district competitions. Overall, Team 41s final ranking in the First Mid-Atlantic Region was 35 out of 125 teams.
- ◆ AP art student Natalie Zurek's artwork was chosen to appear on the cover of the April edition of the *Connection Magazine*.
- ◆ The following students are this year's Boys and Girls State candidates:  
Boys: Amay Mehta, Brandon Tang, Vincent Mattalaino, Shea Keenan, Kurt Gmunder Nick Ciraulo, Sebastian Bienkowski, Adnan Contractor, and Michael Sullivan.  
Girls: Mariam Ivaniashvili, Jordan Ginsburn, Eshika Kaul, Jacquelyn Steen, and Francesca Minervini.
- ◆ The Yearbook Club was awarded the Josten's Look Book Honorable Mention Award for this year's edition.
- ◆ Watchung Hills Drama students won the Foxy Award for Outstanding Performance of a Drama for *Dracula* at Montclair State University's Theater Night on May 14. They were also nominated in three other categories.
- ◆ Watchung Hills Diversity Club students won the Fritz Jonach Upstander Award from the Council on Global Education and Citizenship. An award of \$250 was given to the high school who submitted an outstanding project. Open the link for their submission. [Diversity Club Project](#)
- ◆ On April 27-28, the WHRHS History Bowl Team competed at the Nationals in Arlington, Virginia. Team Captain, Kevin Tan, qualified for the semi-finals of the International Geography Bee.
- ◆ Every year, Celebrating Art holds a nationwide fall and spring art contest for K-12 students. Winners enjoy the wonderful accomplishment of having their artwork printed and published in these anthologies. Each of the following students listed had work accepted into the Spring 2018 Celebrating Art anthology: Anna Kaplan, Amanda Gaensler, Fiona Mulvey, Natalie Zurek, Odalys Barahone-Ordenez, Ruchi Biswas, Kaitlyn Linton, Samantha Hoffmann, Zuha Anjum, Aanika Sadana, Bobbie Waugaman, Abby Watkins, Sarah Young, Kate Familo, John Farley, Chloe Choi, Marianna Renda, Lizzie Wilcenski, Yvonne Tang.
- ◆ Dance Ensemble member Katherine Paterson's choreography was selected to perform at the New Jersey High School Dance Festival in March. Her dance received glowing reviews from the judges and other high school dance instructors.
- ◆ On Friday, May 4, senior Sahil Patel organized our Voter Registration Drive during lunch and four members of the League of Women Voters came to assist. They registered 87 students to vote.

**"The best way to predict your future is to create it."**

**Abraham Lincoln**

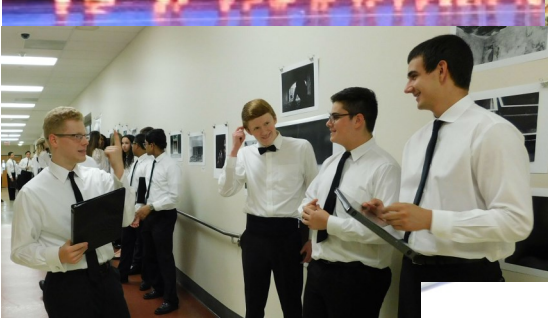
















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